

RESOLUTION NO. 2021-12 OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
OF LA PORTE COUNTY, INDIANA URGING THE INDIANA SUPREME
COURT TO RETAIN USE OF LOCAL NEWSPAPERS FOR LEGAL NOTICES

WHEREAS, the Indiana Supreme Court recently proposed a change to Trial Rule 4.13 that would permit posting of public legal notices on its website as an alternative to publication in local newspapers in Indiana, and

WHEREAS, for decades citizens have come to rely on local newspapers for information on sheriff's sales of property, estate administration, summons/notices of lawsuits and change of name notices, and

WHEREAS, while this body appreciates the willingness of the Indiana Supreme Court to allow its website to be used for such notices, the website should be in addition to and not substitute for notice in local newspapers that are read and accessible to all rather than the internet which is spotty in many parts of Indiana and while the website would contain notices from all over the state, it would not be localized and provide a local, accessible source of information such as local newspapers, and

WHEREAS, local newspapers provide a valued source of news and information to Hoosiers and are vital to an informed, educated electorate, and

WHEREAS, revenue from legal advertising provides a critical source of income for many small newspapers across the state and around the country that are already struggling with smaller newsroom employment, and

WHEREAS, a report by the Knight Foundation and the University of North Carolina disclosed that at the close of 2019 the U.S. had 6,700 newspapers down from nearly 9,000 in 2004, and

WHEREAS, greater than 300 of the nation's 3,143 counties don't have any newspaper available to them with one half of the counties only having one newspaper available to them and only 1/3 of the counties have a daily newspaper available to them such as the *La Porte County Herald-Dispatch*, and

WHEREAS, this Board believes as much transparency and information that can be provided to the public as possible is vital to good functioning county government and the courts, and

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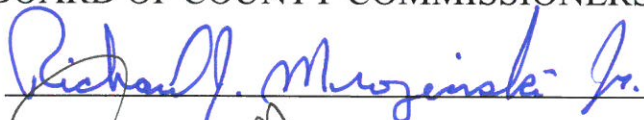
WHEREAS, legal notices published in local newspapers are verifiable, cannot be hacked, are easily achievable as local libraries maintain microfilm copies and also provide valuable information to citizens on plans to buy or sell public property, proposed increases in taxes or floating of bond issues and various zoning matters, and


WHEREAS, legal notices published in local newspapers provide four key advantages over simply posting on a website: accessibility, verification, archiving and an independent distribution system,


NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LA PORTE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS THAT THIS RESOLUTION SHALL BE SUBMITTED TO THE INDIANA SUPREME COURT BY ITS AUGUST 10TH DEADLINE FOR PUBLIC COMMENT AND THAT WE RESPECTFULLY REQUEST THE PROPOSED TRIAL RULE BE CHANGED TO STILL REQUIRE PUBLICATION OF LEGAL NOTICES IN LOCAL NEWSPAPERS OF GENERAL CIRCULATION WITH THE STATE COURT WEBSITE AS A BACKUP OR SECONDARY FORM OF PUBLIC NOTICE.

All of which is resolved this 21st day of July, 2021

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS







ATTEST:



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